Missouri Department of Mental Health
Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse

February 2012

Mark Stringer
Division Director

The Impact of Substance Abuse Treatment on Offender Re-Entry

The majority of individuals in prison have an alcohol and/or a drug abuse problem. Approximately 25 percent of Missouri's corrections population are serving time for a drug (21%) or DWI offense (4%).[1] In addition, substance abuse is closely linked to non-violent offenses such as burglary, theft, and forgery and, to a lesser extent, violent crime such as assault.[2]

In state fiscal year 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010), 18,071 offenders were released to the community from prison. Of these, 15,233 (84%) needed substance abuse treatment and, within one year of their release from prison, 5,740 (38%) received community-based treatment and another 1,304 (9%) received education, intervention, and/or recovery support services to help them maintain a substance-free and crime-free lifestyle. Treatment was primarily outpatient although 350 (6%) and 581 (10%) also received detoxification and short-term residential services, respectively. The Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse, in coordination with the Department of Corrections, oversees the publicly-funded treatment system which provides these services. This treatment system is unable to meet the demand for services due to limited financial and staff resources, and waiting lists are common.

Within one year of release, approximately 26 percent of offenders with a substance abuse problem returned to prison. In comparison, 18 percent of offenders who did not have substance abuse problems returned to prison. Individuals having a severe abuse problem returned to prison at a higher rate than those with a moderate or intense abuse problem. Those offenders who completed substance abuse treatment had a much lower return rate to prison (11%) compared to those who needed but did not receive treatment (28%) and those who dropped out of treatment (33%).

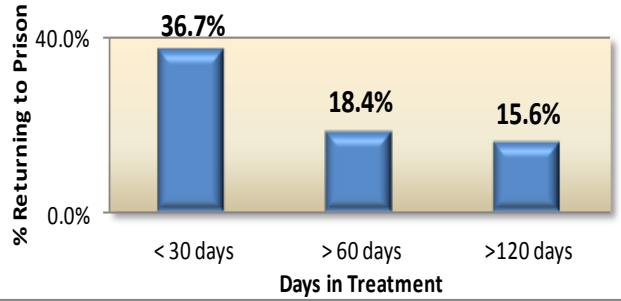
Percent of Offenders with Substance Abuse Problems who Return to Prison within 1 Year of Release

	Moderate Abuse Problem	Intense Abuse Problem	Severe Abuse Problem
Treatment Completion	7.5%	12.5%	12.3%
Treatment Drop-out	27.5%	35.2%	38.6%
No Treatment	25.4%	28.8%	31.4%

- *Offenders who have substance abuse problems are more likely to return to prison than offenders without substance abuse problems.*
- *Offenders who drop-out of substance abuse treatment or who do not get treatment are more likely to return to prison than those who complete treatment.*
- *Offenders with shorter stays in treatment are more likely to return to prison than offenders with longer stays in treatment.*

Longer stays in treatment, less likely to return to prison:
For stays of less than 30 days in treatment, approximately 37 percent of these offenders returned to prison within one year of release. Offenders who remained in treatment for longer periods of time were less likely to return to prison—16 percent if at least 120 days in treatment. The National Institute on Drug Abuse, Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment recommend at least 90 days to achieve a period of sustained abstinence. Longer stays in treatment were also observed when the treatment admission was closer to the release date from prison.

Percent Returning to Prison as a Function of Number of Days in Substance Abuse Treatment



Sources: [1]Missouri Department of Corrections (2010). Incarcerated offenders in Missouri from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 [dataset].
2Bureau of Justice Statistics (2006). "Drug Use and Dependence, State and Federal Prisoners, 2004." Retrieved at: http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=778.

For more information please contact the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse at (573)751-4942 or email: adamail@dmh.mo.gov